



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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### **Virginia Celebrates 2-1-1's Five Year Milestone**

*As the Need for Help Increases, So Do the Number of Calls to State's Free Referral Network*

**Richmond, Va.** – During the past five years, the impact of the economic downturn has increased the need for social services throughout the Commonwealth. With an estimated 1 in every 7 individuals receiving SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) at some point in 2010, the importance of 2-1-1 VIRGINIA and its contributions to those needing help are significant. Virginia's largest information and referral network will mark its fifth anniversary on Feb. 11, 2011 (2-11-11).

"Families and individuals who need help often don't know who to call in their community," said Martin D. Brown, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). "2-1-1 plays an important role in connecting our citizens to the information and services they need."

2-1-1VIRGINIA is an information and referral service of VDSS, provided in partnership with the Council of Community Services, the Family Resource and Referral Center, CrisisLink, The Planning Council, the United Way of Central Virginia, and the United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg.

The free, 24-hour service continues to grow. Calls and referrals are confidential and dialing 2-1-1 connects Virginians to a trained professional who can evaluate requests for assistance and make referrals to available resources. Those seeking help can also search 2-1-1VIRGINIA's extensive database at [www.211virginia.org](http://www.211virginia.org).

Since its launch, 2-1-1VIRGINIA has been contacted more than 1.1 million times for information. In 2010, through 2-1-1VIRGINIA, 56 percent of all identified needs and requests were in the areas of housing and utility assistance. The six regional centers received more than 125,100 calls last year, a 54 percent increase from the year before.

"Given the high demand for assistance, especially with housing and utilities, we are always looking for organizations we can utilize for referrals. If you are not listed in 2-1-1 VIRGINIA, let us hear from you, so that we can add your services to the database. Working in partnership, we can assist more people and fill unmet needs," said Nikki Nicholau, Director of VDSS' Office on Volunteerism and Community Service, which oversees 2-1-1VIRGINIA.

Government, nonprofit, and civic organizations that meet community health and human services needs or offer volunteer opportunities are encouraged to register their services. To list your agency, follow the "[Update/Add Your Agency](#)" [directions](#) on the 2-1-1VIRGINIA home page.

"Navigating the terrain of information and options for help can be overwhelming," Nicholau said. "In many cases, there's assistance available, but people go without because they're not sure where to begin. That's the beauty of 2-1-1 VIRGINIA and why it's so important that service providers register. The more resources available, the more we can offer callers in need."

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*Editor's note: Local 2-1-1 VIRGINIA regional call center representatives and state staff will be available for interviews. For interviews with state/government officials, contact Carla Harris at 804-726-7107 or [carla.harris@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:carla.harris@dss.virginia.gov).*



## About 2-1-1 VIRGINIA

- 2-1-1 VIRGINIA is a statewide service, operating 24-hours a day. Regional call centers are in Arlington, Lynchburg, Norfolk, Richmond, Roanoke and Staunton.
- Centers can assist callers in 200 languages.
- 2-1-1 VIRGINIA is part of the national 2-1-1 program.
- [2009-10 Annual Report \(pdf\)](#).

## 2-1-1VIRGINIA Call Center Contacts

Statewide Coordinator: Barb Putney; (540) 339-9149; [barbp@councilofcommunityservices.org](mailto:barbp@councilofcommunityservices.org)

### *Northwest Regional Center*

Contact: Alan Fairfield, (540) 245-5899; [frc2005@yahoo.com](mailto:frc2005@yahoo.com)

**Service area** - Counties: Augusta, Albemarle, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Frederick, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, Page, Rappahannock, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Warren; Cities: Buena Vista, Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester

### *Northern Regional Center*

Contact: Marshall Ellis, (703) 516-6768, [marshall@crisislink.org](mailto:marshall@crisislink.org)

**Service area** - Counties: Arlington, Caroline, Fairfax, King George, Prince William, Loudoun, Spotsylvania, Stafford; Cities: Alexandria, Fairfax City, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park

### *Central Regional Center*

Contact: Joan Phelps, (434) 455-6906; [joan.phelps@unitedwaycv.org](mailto:joan.phelps@unitedwaycv.org)

**Service area** - Counties: Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, Franklin, Henry, Patrick, Pittsylvania; Cities: Danville, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Bedford

### *Southwest Regional Center*

Contact: Denny Huff, (540) 985-0131 Ext. 115; [dennyh@councilofcommunityservices.org](mailto:dennyh@councilofcommunityservices.org)

**Service area** - Counties: Alleghany, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Roanoke, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe; Cities: Bristol, Covington, Galax, Norton, Radford, Roanoke, Salem

### *Southeast Regional Center*

Contact: George Harden, (757) 640-8639; [gharden@theplanningcouncil.org](mailto:gharden@theplanningcouncil.org)

**Service area** - Counties: Essex, King & Queen, King William, James City, Southampton, Isle of Wight, Northampton, Accomack, York, Lancaster, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, Westmoreland, Gloucester, Mathews; Cities: Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg

### *Richmond / Southside Regional Center*

Contact: Trisha Steiniger; (804) 225-7916; [steinigert@yourunitedway.org](mailto:steinigert@yourunitedway.org)

**Service area** - Counties: Brunswick, Buckingham, Amelia, Charlotte, Cumberland, Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Farmville, Goochland, Greenville, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, New Kent, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Surry, Sussex; Cities: Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg, Richmond